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ABSTRACT

This collection of abstracts is part of a continuing series providing information on recent doctoral dissertations. The 14 titles deal with the following topics: case studies of college student and adult composing processes; developing patterns and individual differences in children's writing; writing apprehension's relation to writing quality; egocentrism in the written work of college freshman composition students; synchronic/diachronic linguistic analysis of high school student compositions; syntactic development in college freshman composition students; cross-cultural comparison of three writing systems as they relate to dyslexia; a framework for discourse analysis; audience adaptation skill development for writing persuasively; and the relationship between the written communication of community college deans and their effectiveness ratings. (RL)

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Written Language and Writing Abilities:

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Abstracts of the following dissertations are included in this collection:

Bechtel, Judith A. Blackburn
THE COMPOSING PROCESSES OF SIX MALE COLLEGE FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

Bodkin, Ann Z.
CHILDREN'S WRITING: SELECTED DIFFERENCES BY SEX, GRADE LEVEL, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS

Garcia, Robert Joseph
AN INVESTIGATION OF RELATIONSHIPS: WRITING APPREHENSION, SYNTACTIC PERFORMANCE, AND WRITING QUALITY

Harvley-Felder, Zena Camille
SOME FACTORS RELATING TO WRITING APPREHENSION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

Krnacik, Mildred Bauman
EGOCENTRISM IN THE WRITTEN AND ORAL PRODUCTIONS OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION STUDENTS

Leffert, Beatrice Gold
SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC FACTORS IN THE WRITTEN COMPOSITION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Najjar, Mathilde Montgomery
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYNTACTIC DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE BY FRESHMAN STUDENTS ON SELECTED COMPETENCIES IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION

Ovitz, Janet McDougald
CROSS CULTURAL COMPARISON OF THREE WRITING SYSTEMS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DYSLEXIA

Perl, Sondra Anne
FIVE WRITERS WRITING: CASE STUDIES OF THE COMPOSING PROCESSES OF UNSKILLED COLLEGE WRITERS

Pickering, Wilbur Norman
A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

Rubin, Donald L.
DEVELOPMENT IN SYNTACTIC AND STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF AUDIENCE ADAPTATION SKILLS IN WRITTEN PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION

Smith, Richard Albert
AN ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S WRITING TO DETERMINE DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS

Sommers, Nancy Irma
REVISION IN THE COMPOSING PROCESS: A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN AND EXPERIENCED ADULT WRITERS

Taylor, Maureen Phyllis
A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEANS AND THE DEANS' EFFECTIVENESS RATINGS

THE COMPOSING PROCESSES OF SIX MALE COLLEGE FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN TECHNICAL PROGRAMS
Order No. 7904775

BECHTEL, Judith A. Blackburn, Ed.D. University of Cincinnati, 1978. 208pp.

Six male college freshmen enrolled in technical programs were selected from composition classes at the Ohio College of Applied Science (OCAS) on the basis of scores on the Verbal Reasoning subtest of the Differential Aptitude Test (DAT). Three from regular Freshman English, designated as the high group, (HG), scored above the 85th percentile. Three from Remedial English, designated as the low group (LG), scored below the 55th percentile. These six students were videotaped while writing regular class assignments--two summaries and two essays.

From among the 24 compositions written, nine were selected for videotape analysis. These nine represented the total effort of one subject (his four compositions) and one essay from the other five subjects. Detailed descriptions of the subjects' behaviors and taxonomies of the strategies they used were incorporated into a model of process style which depicted the following graphically for each subject:

1. Proportions of words produced in pre-writing, writing, revising, and copying,
2. Alternations of stages of writing,
3. Rate of production,
4. Percentage of total word production that made up the final copy,
5. Proportions of mid-sentence pauses and written-over words,
6. Number of kinds of focus of attention,
7. Number of kinds of changes made,
8. Number of kinds of nervous accompanying behaviors,
9. Number of words in the final copy,
10. Amount of time taken to write the composition.

To establish the effectiveness of the various process styles, three outside evaluators used the holistic method of ranking to judge not only the compositions of the six subjects, but also those written by their classmates for the same assignment.

A profile of each subject included the following: (1) a description of his process style, (2) the rank assigned his finished composition by the outside evaluators, (3) his scores on two standardized tests (the DAT and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale) and two nonstandardized measures (an Attitude Inventory and a Language Experience Inventory), (4) his performance in relation to his classmates on all of the above, and (5) comments made by the subject while composing and during an audio-taped interview with the investigator.

The methodology used in this study, including the preservation of the chronological order of writing on videotype and the development of a tally sheet for recording observed behaviors, proved to be sensitive to many aspects of the composing process. Although no ideal writer emerged, certain traits distinguished effective writers from ineffective ones. These included: (1) focus on organization and rhetoric instead of mechanical accuracy, (2) low proportion of crossed-out and written-over words, (3) reliance on spelling strategies other than sounding out words, (4) ability to shift perspectives so that creating and proofreading became truly separate activities, (5) reliance on intuition rather than rule applications in proofreading, (6) an understanding of the extent of elaboration expected of academic writing, and (7) ability to think logically rather than by association. Each of these traits, however, exists in relation to others in an individual writer, and it is the whole constellation of interacting traits that determines effectiveness rather than the manifestation of certain specific behaviors or attitudes.

In addition to these findings, the data suggested that summaries require less pre-writing and revising than essays do and that differences in performance may result from differences in schooling and motivation as well as differences in testable verbal skill. Generally, these subjects worked hard, but were neither inspired by the need to resolve a problem through writing, nor open to the satisfactions to be gained from making discoveries during the process of writing.

CHILDREN'S WRITING: SELECTED DIFFERENCES BY SEX, GRADE LEVEL, AND SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS
Order No. 7817015

BODKIN, Ann Z., Ph.D. State University of New York at Buffalo, 1978. 174pp.

This study sought to determine differences found in the writing of boys and girls in grades three and six in three socioeconomic settings as to frequency of writing, length of the products, territoriality expressed in the content of products, the use of the reflexive or the extensive mode, and the use of the first person singular pronoun, "I," with the latter examined as to whether the "I's" were "reportive" or "emotive."

A sample of 120 boys and girls was randomly selected from a population of 301 children in groups of two third-grade and two sixth-grade classes from each of three socioeconomic areas – the central city, the blue-collar, and the middle class communities.

All children were encouraged to freely choose whatever they wished to write and wrote daily in journals for ten consecutive days. Journals were examined to determine the total number of entries and the total number of words for each child. Five entries were selected according to a number scheme consistently used for each journal. Each entry was coded by number for sex, grade and socioeconomic level so that each was not identifiable. A judgment as to the territoriality – primary or extended, and the mode – reflexive or extensive was made by the examiner.

The writing sample was classified as being in primary territory if the content of the entry was judged to be in the realm of home, family relationships, family events, school and school interpersonal relationships. The sample was considered to be in extended territory, if the writing content was judged to be within the realm of sports, metropolitan, national, world, historical or catastrophic events. The entry was considered to be in the reflexive mode if the writing was reflective and contemplative, or the sample was considered to be in the extensive mode if the writing was active and participatory.

Other counts were made of the number of reportive "I's," the number of emotive "I's," and the total number of "I's" the number of times each child wrote and the number of words each child used in the writing.

A statistical and an observational analysis of the writing content was made. A three-way univariate analysis of variance and covariance was utilized (sex x ses x grade) on each dependent variable. The covariate used was the New York State Pupil Evaluation Program Test. In addition the Scheffé procedure was used to determine if differences found were significant among the three socioeconomic levels and between the two grade levels with regard to territoriality, number of "I's" and mode.

The following are among the major findings of this study:

1. Sex Differences – There is a significant difference in the writing of boys and girls. Girls in the third and sixth-grades in all three socioeconomic areas wrote significantly more times in primary territory, while boys in the same grades and socioeconomic areas wrote significantly more in extended territory. Girls wrote more often and to a greater length in both grade levels and in the three socioeconomic areas.

2. Grade Differences – "I" was found a significantly greater number of times in the sixth-grade writing than in the third-grade writing. Also third-grade children wrote significantly more in the extensive mode while sixth-grade children wrote more often in the reflexive mode.

3. Socioeconomic Differences – A greater number of "I's" were used in the writing of children residing in the blue-collar community than by children living in either of the two other communities. Also, blue-collar children wrote to a significantly greater length than did the children of the other communities.

Observational findings include: 1. Children in all groups wrote about out of school interests and activities. 2. Children in all groups seemed to like to write in journals. 3. Often there was little correlation between reading comprehension test scores and ability to write well. 4. If children were interested in what they wrote about, this accounted for differences in the composition with regard to length, sentence structure, clarity and use of conventions. 5. Often the subject of many journal entries was related to the time of day children were asked to write.

AN INVESTIGATION OF RELATIONSHIPS: WRITING APPREHENSION, SYNTACTIC PERFORMANCE, AND WRITING QUALITY Order No. 7900025

GARCIA, Robert Joseph, Ph.D. Arizona State University, 1977. 159pp. Chairman: Dr. Nelson L. Haggerson

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationships among three factors: writing apprehension levels, syntactic encoding performance, and quality writing performance.

Procedures

The sample used in this study consisted of thirty-two students randomly chosen from the population of the Transfer English Program at Arizona Western College. Data were gathered through the Writing Apprehension Test (WAT), an in-class essay assignment, and a rater-judged quality writing process. The data yielded through these procedures included variables of sex, writing apprehension scores, quality writing scores, and twelve syntactic encoding variables: words per t-unit, words per clause, clauses per t-unit, total t-units, total words, infinitives, participles, gerunds, prepositional phrases, adjectival clauses, adverbial clauses, and nominal clauses.

The data were reduced and processed in the Arizona State University Computer Center. A multivariate analysis of variance was the primary procedure utilized, although selected variables were submitted to univariate analysis of variance and correlational analysis.

Results

Statistical tests revealed significant differences between high- and low-apprehension subjects on seven syntactic variables (infinitives, participles, gerunds, prepositional phrases, adjectival, adverbial, and nominal clauses). There was also significant difference between writing apprehension scores and quality writing scores. There were no significant differences between high- and low-apprehension subjects on five syntactic variables (words per t-unit, words per clause, clauses per t-unit, total t-units, and total words). There were no significant differences between sex categories in relation to apprehension levels, syntactic performance, and quality writing performance.

Conclusions drawn from the study include:

1. Quality writing performance was dependent upon high and low levels of writing apprehension.

2. Attitude, as measured by the writing apprehension test, that a student holds toward the act of writing clearly affects both how he or she will write and how others will evaluate that writing.

3. Low-apprehension students demonstrated syntactic characteristics of mature writers more consistently than did high-apprehension students.

4. Syntactic encoding performance and quality writing performance are not limited to certain sex categories.

SOME FACTORS RELATING TO WRITING APPREHENSION: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY Order No. 7910162

HARVLEY-FELDER, Zena Camille, Ph.D. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1978. 121pp. Supervisor: Dr. Sterling Hennis

This study was an exploratory study of factors relating to writing apprehension. An attempt was made to pinpoint specific factors, to identify the makeup of those factors, and to explore their relationship to writing apprehension. Four factors were originally hypothesized to exist:

(1) positive reinforcement/punishment in school, grades 7–10.

(2) models outside of school who engage in and endorse writing.

(3) positive initial writing experiences/negative initial writing experience in school, grades 1–6.

(4) communication seeking behavior in the classroom.

Three factors were identified in the study and found to relate to writing apprehension: Punishment, Positive Reinforcement, and Communication Seeking Behavior. The items composing the first two factors were reconstructions of items from the originally hypothesized factors. The third factor was substantiated as originally hypothesized.

Interviews with 12 high writing apprehensive students and 12 low writing apprehensive students further illuminated the relationship of the three factors to writing apprehension by uncovering marked differences between the high and low apprehensive groups in preschool, elementary, junior high and high school, and home experiences.

EGOCENTRISM IN THE WRITTEN AND ORAL PRODUCTIONS OF FRESHMAN COMPOSITION STUDENTS Order No. 7822841

KRNACIK, Mildred Bauman, A.D., The University of Michigan, 1978. 135pp. Co-Chairmen: Loren S. Barritt, Alan B. Howes

This paper is concerned with a problem encountered by many teachers of college composition courses--the apparent inability of many of their students to adequately handle abstract topics in their writing. While in some cases failure may be the result of student boredom, lack of effort, or lack of information, in many others the student, even after repeated consultations with his teacher, neither understands what is expected of him nor understands why his writing, often the product of hours of work, is not acceptable. Hypothesizing that these failures may signify a cognitive state termed, by Jean Piaget, egocentric, 91 students in freshman composition classes were asked to retell a story both verbally and in writing to see how well they could meet the needs of their hypothetical audience in this relatively simple task. (This experiment was based on one Piaget used to test for egocentricity in children). Their retellings were examined for the amount of factual information reproduced in relation to the facts given in the original and the number of times the reteller explained motivation for actions in relation to the motivations given in the original story. It was found that 1) the subjects tended to condense the story in their retellings leaving out facts they deemed irrelevant; 2) most students supplied few motivational details; 3) rehearsal had a significant effect only in reference to factual items and only when the story was retold orally first, then in writing; 4) the mode of retelling, written or oral, made little difference in the amount of factual information given. But more detail about motivation was given in the written versions; 5) egocentricity was not obvious on the factual measure, but only 26% of the sample had scores indicating that they engaged in decentering to the audience's point of view on the motivational measure; 6) women demonstrated significantly less egocentricity on both of these measures than men.

SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC ANALYSIS OF LINGUISTIC FACTORS IN THE WRITTEN COMPOSITION OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Order No. 7821250

LEFFERT, Beatrice Gold, Ph.D. Hofstra University, 1978. 254pp.

The major purposes of this study were: (1) to establish an objectively quantified description of students' written composition with regard to selected linguistic factors in official school newspapers; (2) to investigate whether change had occurred in use of these factors, diachronically, between the school years 1949–50 and 1973–74, a span of twenty-five years; (3) to investigate whether differences were present among the geographical regions of the United States, synchronically for the years studied, and diachronically between 1949–50 and 1973–74; and (4) to compare changes, if any, derived from the diachronic investigation with the attributes of oral expression found in the review of literature.

To accomplish these purposes, forty linguistic factors were identified in the first hundred words of forty-eight high school editorials (twenty-four from each year) and of thirteen letters-to-the-editor and thirteen contemporary editorials from each year.

A multiple analysis of variance in a 2 x 4 design of two time periods and four regions was performed to determine whether significant differences (at the .05 level or better) existed (1) between editorials that were twenty-five years apart and (2) among editorials from different regions. In addition, t-tests were performed to determine whether significant differences (at the .05 level or better) existed (1) between letters and contemporary editorials and (2) between letters that were twenty-five years apart. The significant differences and the apparent tendencies towards change that were found were compared with a list of attributes of oral expression derived from review of previous research.

Significant findings from editorials indicated (a) diachronic decreases for subordination ratio and personal references, (b) diachronic increases for abstract nouns and multisyllabic words, and (c) a higher Dale-Chall readability grade level. One significant synchronic regional difference was found for unusual words. Since a significant difference was found for only five diachronic factors and one synchronic factor, this effect may have been reached by chance. Significant time/region interactions, all relating to syntax, were found for (a) subordination ratio, (b) dependent clauses, (c) length of dependent clauses, (d) introductory prepositional phrases, (e) complex and compound-complex sentences, and (f) subordinate connectives.

Letters-to-the-editor of 1949–50, compared with contemporary editorials, yielded eight synchronic differences although the matched set of 1973–74 yielded only three, indicating a diachronic shift.

Letters-to-the-editor of 1949–50, compared with letters of 1973–74, yielded significantly fewer (a) adverbial phrases, (b) unusual words, and (c) a lower Dale-Chall readability level, but more (d) finite verbs in the present tense, (e) grammatical expletives, and (f) rhetorical questions and direct quotations.

Conclusions regarding diachronic change included: (1) Increases in abstract nouns, multisyllabic words, and readability level may indicate extension of writing vocabulary, (2) Decrease in subordination may indicate a decrease in clausal embeddings (possibly replaced by phrasal modification), (3) Decrease in subordination together with tendencies towards simplification concurrent with broadening of interests and vocabulary may reflect the influence of oral expression, (4) Tendencies towards diachronic shift for frequencies of eighteen factors may indicate evolution in usage.

Conclusions regarding synchronic differences included: (1) Lack of significant differences for total mean scores of thirty-nine of the forty factors considered by region signified nationwide uniformity overall for these factors, (2) Significant interaction for six syntactic factors indicated local variations at different time periods, (3) Clusters of high frequencies in each region indicated a tendency towards regional style.

Several of the implications derived from this study were: (1) Changes in students' language styles appeared to be evolutionary and do not seem to have undergone drastic deterioration, (2) Expanded oral communication may not have greatly influenced writing style except for substitution of cumulative style in place of subordination, (3) The tendency towards syntactic simplicity may presage other changes which extend the flexibility of English.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SYNTACTIC DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE BY FRESHMAN STUDENTS ON SELECTED COMPETENCIES IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION

Order No. 7905015

NAJJAR, Mathilde Montgomery, Ed.D. Boston University School of Education, 1978. 136pp. Major Professor: William L. Smith

In order to see if any relationship existed between observed changes in quality of writing and changes in the use of certain syntactic variables, writing samples of fifty college freshmen enrolled in a competency-based course of English composition were evaluated for quality and for measures of syntactic development.

Curriculum for the English composition course was the same for all students. It focused on the writing of essays by attention to the six areas of required competency: Main Idea, Introduction, Conclusion, Paragraph Development, Support, and Word Choice. There was no special instruction in the area of syntax.

Each student was asked to write a 50-minute in-class essay at the beginning of the semester and another 50-minute in-class essay at the end of the semester, fourteen weeks later, using topics matched for pre and post-testing.

Quality scores were determined by two trained raters, whose results were tested for reliability. The raters assessed quality of the essays by scoring the departmental grading sheet, rating each of the six required writing competencies, and summing the scores. Pre and post scores were evaluated for significant change by t-test.

Student writing samples were analyzed for evidences of syntactic development over the semester's time. The samples were tested for scores of the following variables: T-unit length, clause length, clauses/T-units, types of subordinate clauses, active and passive verbs, types of non-finite verbs, appositives, and "garbles." t-Test analysis was used to compare pre and post scores for evidences of significant change.

Pearson Product Moment Correlations were used to test for relationships between the quality scores and scores of syntactic variables. Correlations were computed for all syntactic scores on the pre-test with pre-test quality scores and for all syntactic scores on the post-test with post-test quality scores.

Results showed that quality of student writing increased significantly over the semester's time, but that the writing level of most students was still less than the pre-determined minimum acceptable competency.

Only two of the syntactic variables showed any significant changes from beginning to end of the semester: Noun clauses decreased in frequency and adjective clauses increased. The data indicated that the level of syntactic development of the students tested was roughly equivalent to third year high school.

Altogether there was little evidence of a significant relationship between changes in quality of student writing and changes in its scores of syntactic development.

The data were further examined by comparing sub-groups within the quality range. Four groups were designated, two groups above the point of minimal competency, and two groups below. Syntactic scores for each of the groups were compared for pre and post changes of T-unit length and clause length, two widely investigated variables, and for changes in adjective clause and infinitive scores, the two variables which had shown either increase over the semester's time or had correlated with quality.

This method of looking at the relationship between quality and syntax showed some trend of increases, pre to post, for syntax scores. It also showed quite clearly that higher syntactic scores existed in those groups where quality scores were higher.

CROSS CULTURAL COMPARISON OF THREE WRITING SYSTEMS WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO DYSLEXIA

Order No. 7820544

OVITZ, Janet McDougald, Ph.D. University of Colorado at Boulder, 1978. 287pp. Director: Associate Professor Dorothea V. Kaschube

Dyslexia is defined as difficulty in decoding and encoding written language. Developmentally, it is considered a defect of language processing even though it is primarily associated with written not spoken language. It is assumed to be a neurological deficit with possible genetic determination resulting in maturational lag. Most information has been gathered in the English language where the percentages of afflicted individuals appear to be high.

As little information is available on the occurrence of dyslexic phenomenon in written languages outside English, this investigation concerns itself with discovering the developmental features of two orthographies, Hebrew and Chinese, which differ not only in construction of the script, but in basic orthographic units utilized and the preferred direction of writing. Hebrew is a syllabic orthography written from right to left. Chinese is a morphemic, ideographic system traditionally written in vertical columns from right to left. Both orthographies are compared to English, a system utilizing the phonetic Greco-Roman script and written from left to right.

Data gathered from populations of Hebrew and Chinese speaking children is presented. Samples of writing obtained from children represent a sequence of ages and stages in the acquisition of reading and writing competence. Visual-spatial errors such as reversals and rotations of written forms are compared across orthographies. Methodologies used in teaching the scripts are indicated.

It is found that children learning Hebrew and Chinese reverse and rotate symbols much as their English-speaking peers. This agrees with the experiments of Eleanor Gibson. The tendency to reverse and rotate symbols diminishes with age.

The direction of the written script does not seem to be causally related to preferred handedness. Rather it is found that dyslexic phenomenon appears to depend more upon the number of logical difficulties which are inherent in the script itself and the manner in which it is taught. Syllabic systems of writing appear to be better suited for the maximal ease of teaching reading and writing in phonetic languages. Dyslexic phenomenon in English appears to be due in part to the number and nature of irregularities of the spelling system and in part to continued dyspedagogia.

Considering recent experimental procedures as well as current views on cerebral dominance, it is suggested that the occurrence of dyslexia may be the result of an intense hemispheric conflict in the process of lateralization which is influenced by and in turn influences the ease by which an orthography is acquired. It may also indicate a preference for a particular hemispheric cognitive style rather than a language defect as such.

It is suggested that different writing systems may employ different cognitive strategies which effect the ease of acquisition. Chinese may be characterized as a visual-spatial and iconic system. Hebrew employs a temporal-sequential strategy with the syllable as the minimum phonetic unit. English employs each strategy unsystematically which may cause the child learning interference in the acquisition of reading and writing skills.

FIVE WRITERS WRITING: CASE STUDIES OF THE COMPOSING PROCESSES OF UNSKILLED COLLEGE WRITERS

Order No. 7824104

PERL, Sondra Anne, Ph.D. New York University, 1978. 441pp.

This research addresses three major questions: (1) how do unskilled writers write? (2) how can their writing processes be analyzed? and (3) what does an increased understanding of their processes suggest about the nature of the composing process in general and the manner in which writing is taught in the schools?

Unskilled writers in a community college are chosen for study because (1) they represent a growing segment of the college population; that is, students whose writing is judged as "deficient" in language skills and whose linguistic and educational backgrounds set them apart from the better-prepared, traditional college students; and (2) they have been most seriously constrained by the traditional approach used to teach writing, the "product-orientation" that focuses on the errors of performance without acknowledging the writing competencies that lie beneath the surface.

An underlying assumption in this study is that in searching for a more adequate understanding of a human process, it is important to observe people engaging in that process; thus five college students are asked to compose on four separate occasions in front of the researcher and in the presence of a tape recorder. Students are directed to compose aloud, to externalize their thinking processes as much as possible, during each session. In one additional session, a writing profile on students' perceptions and memories of writing is developed through the use of an open-ended interview.

Students are asked to write on material they are studying in college. This "content material" is divided into two models, the extensive and the reflective. Extensive refers to the writer approaching the topic in an objective, impersonal fashion: reflexive refers to the writer approaching the same topic in an affective, personalized fashion. In this study, contrary to Emig's (1969) definitions, it is assumed that the teacher is always the audience.

This study devises a coding system for describing and analyzing the composing process. This approach provides: (1) a way of viewing on one page the movements and behavioral sequences of a student's composing process: (2) a way of determining the frequency and duration of each behavior; and (3) a way of assessing the relation of each behavior to the whole process. This coding system is used to construct a composing style sheet for each student. From the style sheets, patterns within a student's process are revealed; from the patterns, similarities and differences among a group of students can be determined. Thus, the composing style sheets are a tool for analyzing the unfolding of the composing process.

A major finding of this study, based on the patterns in the composing processes--processes which are recursive in nature. This finding contradicts the conventional view, namely that these students "do not know how to write." In fact, the data here indicate that the writing of these students remains problematic because of the nature of their already internalized, deeply embedded composing process, and that newer, more dynamic ways of describing the process need to be brought into the classroom.

This study offers teachers two new conceptions of the composing process. "Four features of the composing process" are presented as a model to be used in the classroom to help students assess where they are in relation to their own experience of composing; the concept of "Retrospective and Projective Structuring" is introduced to elucidate the complex, dynamic nature of the composing process. The study concludes with suggestions for future case study research, most particularly the need to maintain continual contact between cases and the theories derived from them.

A FRAMEWORK FOR DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

PICKERING, Wilbur Norman, Ph.D. University of Toronto (Canada), 1978

The main successes and advances in discourse analysis up to this point have been with narrative type discourse in general and participant orientation in particular. This thesis proposes a framework for discourse analysis that will handle expository discourse in particular and will presumably be valid for any other discourse type as well. It is proposed that the discourse system of a language and the discourse structure of a text be understood in terms of five organizing perspectives: hierarchy, cohesion, prominence, style, and strategy. There are a number of factors that contribute to each. They are given respectively--constituent structure, taxis, span; grammatical agreement, phoric reference, conjunction, lexical association, given information; theme, focus, emphasis; register, code, dialect, idiolect; content, genre, information rate, modality, sincerity. The perspectives are simultaneous and overlapping, but distinct. The factors of medium, language and culture represent prior constraints upon the operation of the factors listed above. Language is defined in terms of phonology, grammar and lexicon. It is a claim of this thesis that there is no language specific semology--there is a universal semantic hierarchy and discourse specific semantic structure. The framework is applied to the Greek text of Paul's letter to the Colossians by way of illustration. A modified structural diagram is used to display the discourse structure of the text--an attempt is made to include all the perspectives that make up the framework.

DEVELOPMENT IN SYNTACTIC AND STRATEGIC ASPECTS OF AUDIENCE ADAPTATION SKILLS IN WRITTEN PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATION Order No. 7912071

RUBIN, Donald L., Ph.D. University of Minnesota, 1978. 186pp.

This study derives from a conception of language development as maturation in the ability to differentially deploy verbal resources, both linguistic structures and communicative strategies, in adaptation to varying communication tasks. In particular, competent language users engage in social cognitive processes which enable them to adapt their messages to audience characteristics. These processes are operative in written as well as oral communication. Previous resource indicates that development in persuasive communication is marked by increased size of strategic repertoires, more frequent use of elaborated and target-oriented strategies, and increasingly differential use of strategies in addressing varying audiences.

Eighteen subjects at each of the fourth-, eighth-, twelfth-grade and expert adult levels were examined. Utilizing elicitation procedures designed to heighten sense of audience, subjects wrote persuasive compositions concerning glass recycling to targets of high, intermediate, and low intimacy. A subsample participated in a social cognitive assessment requiring subjects to rationalize strategy choices in hypothetical situations.

Syntactic analyses of scripts yielded indices of syntactic complexity based on T-unit segmentation. Strategic analyses employed a content analysis of persuasive appeals. Social cognitive ability was measured by depth of social inferences manifested in strategy rationales.

Findings of age-related increases in syntactic complexity were consistent with previous research. Of greater significance, the audience factor exerted substantial effects, with high intimacy targets engendering highly subordinated writing while those of low intimacy engendered writing marked by lengthy clauses. A hypothesis inversely relating perceived reading effort and interpersonal commitment was forwarded to account for this result. An increase with age in differential use of syntactic complexity for audience adaptation was inconclusively suggested.

Effects of age on use of persuasive strategies were evident. Strategies such as anticipating reservations and appealing to sources of target internal gratification, which presumably require advanced social cognitive activity, were used most often by older subjects. Older subjects also tended to establish persuader credibility and to place the topic of persuasion in a broad social and historical context. Younger subjects tended to produce unelaborated strategies such as simple requests and imperatives.

Target intimacy also affected strategy use with low intimacy audiences attracting strategies which rendered messages self-contained. Messages addressed to high intimacy targets included references to interpersonal relations, sources of target gratification, and strategies aimed at reducing the incongruity of the written channel. Expert adults used persuasive strategies differentially for audience adaptation. Younger subjects did not.

Although measured social cognitive ability exhibited an increase with age, it affected message outcomes only minimally. This may be due to methodological shortcomings of the social cognitive measure.

This study supports the content that audience characteristics are important determinants of variation in written language and that the ability to adapt to differing audiences is a mark of maturity in language use. This position concerning the role of social context ought to inform communication pedagogy. Additional developmental-descriptive research is needed to determine the optimal sequencing of student experiences, and training studies are needed to test assumptions concerning the effectiveness of instructional variables.

AN ANALYSIS OF CHILDREN'S WRITING TO DETERMINE DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS Order No. 7815831

SMITH, Richard Albert, Ed.D. Lehigh University, 1978. 138pp.

Researchers have asked for greater exploration in the area of developmental patterns in children's writing, but have done little to date to carry out such research. This study was proposed to add to the body of knowledge concerning developmental patterns in children's unassigned writing.

The problem which was considered in this study was: Can developmental patterns be found in the written expression of elementary school children by analyzing the use of person, territoriality, and mode of writing used in unassigned writing? An analysis of children's unassigned written expression was completed to determine if developmental patterns are present, and the effects that grade level, recorded intelligence quotient, and sex of the writer had on choice of person used, territoriality, and mode of writing in unassigned written expression.

The population for this study consisted of 894 second, fourth, and sixth grade students enrolled in 31 classrooms of the Whitehall-Coplay School District, Whitehall, Pa. The students were requested to submit unassigned writing samples during a three week period. After a total of 865 writings were collected, each writing was matched with the demographic information needed; age, sex, and recorded intelligence quotient. A total of 753 writings were used as the basis of the random sampling procedure to identify 50 boys and 50 girls at each of the grade levels.

The randomly selected writings were analyzed and categorized according to the category system developed to include: use of person, territoriality, and mode of writing. Each writing was also categorized according to sex, grade level, and recorded intelligence quotient. A frequency of each category was compiled. A percentage of agreement was computed between the researcher's categorization and the categorization of the two additional raters. Contingency tables were developed based on the observed cell frequencies, and the chi square statistic was applied to determine acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses as stated.

Analysis of the data using the chi square statistic showed that there was a significant difference between the use of person and the grade level at which it was employed. No significant difference was indicated between boys or girls in the use of person in unassigned writing. There was no significant difference in the use of person between children with varying recorded intelligence quotients. There was no significant difference in the territoriality in unassigned writing and the grade level at which it was written. No significant difference was found in the territoriality in the unassigned writing of boys or girls. There was no significant difference in the territoriality in unassigned and varying recorded intelligence quotients of the writers. A significant difference was found between the mode of writing in unassigned writing and the grade level at which it was employed. There was a significant difference between the mode of writing used in unassigned writing by boys or girls. There was no significant difference between the mode of writing in unassigned writing and the varying recorded intelligence quotients of the writers.

REVISION IN THE COMPOSING PROCESS: A CASE STUDY OF COLLEGE FRESHMEN AND EXPERIENCED ADULT WRITERS Order No. 7905022

SOMMERS, Nancy Irma, Ed.D. Boston University School of Education, 1978. 189pp. Major Professor: William L. Smith

Revision has been assumed to be the final stage in the linear model of the composing process. The assumption has been that revision is temporally different from the pre-writing and writing stages of the process. The purpose of this study was to describe the revision process from a non-temporal, theoretical perspective in order to understand what operations and subprocesses constitute revision. In this study the revision process is simply defined as a sequence of changes in the composition; these changes are initiated by cues and occur throughout the writing of a work.

A case study methodology was used. Eight college freshmen and seven experienced adult writers served as subjects. All subjects wrote one composition in each of the three modes (expressive, explanatory, persuasive), rewrote each composition twice, suggested revisions for a control composition, and were interviewed three times.

Four revision operations were identified: deletion, substitution, addition, and reordering. Four levels of change were identified: word, phrase, sentence, thema. A coding system was developed in order to analyze the frequency of revision by level and by operation.

The concentration of changes for the student writers was on the word and phrase level; lexical deletions and substitutions were the major operations. For the experienced writers, the heaviest concentration of changes was on the sentence level; addition was the major operation, but the changes were distributed among the various levels and operations.

A set of theoretical constructs were developed to facilitate comparison within and between the two groups: theory of revision, scale of concerns, revision strategies, dissonance.

The data indicated that while there were specific differences among subjects in each group, there was great commonality in procedures, assumptions, and theories. However, between the groups two principal differences were found. First, the student writers had operational procedures and assumptions for revising but these were not codified nor synthesized into a formal, articulatable theory. The experienced writers had a well-developed, articulatable theory which provided operational control over their process and was evidenced in their revisions. Second the scales of concern of each group contained common items. The experienced group had more items in the scale, and the weight given to these items was remarkably different from the weight given by the students. Consequently, the experienced writers focused on higher level revision strategies. A major implication of this study was that the control writers exert over their revision process is directly related to their theory of the process.

A STUDY OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE WRITTEN COMMUNICATION OF COMMUNITY COLLEGE DEANS AND THE DEANS' EFFECTIVENESS RATINGS Order No, 7905065

TAYLOR, Maureen Phyllis, Ed.D. Western Michigan University, 1978. 120pp.

Is there a relationship between the quality of the memos sent to faculty members by a community college dean and faculty perceptions of the dean's effectiveness as an administrator? This study was designed to investigate the possibility of such a relationship. There is theory linking written communication with perception of administrators' leadership qualities, but there have been few empirical studies of the relationship.

A sample of 21 deans from eight community colleges in southern and western Michigan provided data for the study. Samples of their memos and letters to faculty covering a two-month period before they were asked to participate were analyzed using four scales: Flesch's Reading Ease Scale (1948), Flesch's Human Interest Scale (1948), Gibson's Stuffiness Scale from Tough, Sweet & Stuffy (1966), and a Grammatical Usage and Accuracy Scale developed for this research. Mean scores on these instruments were used as indicators of the deans' written communication and were correlated with the effectiveness scores given them by faculty on Ohio State's Leader Behavior Description Questionnaire. These scores were obtained from four to ten randomly-selected faculty members under each dean. The LBDQ measures leadership effectiveness on two dimensions: Consideration and Initiating Structure, so each dean had three scores, one for each dimension and a Total score which was a combination of the two.

It was important to investigate the relationship between each of the four writing measures and each of the three effectiveness scores, so there were 12 research hypotheses. When the formula for Pearson r was applied to the data, only two coefficients were large enough to be significant at the .05 level, using a Z test for significance. The correlation between grammatical usage and accuracy and the Consideration score was -.761; its correlation with the Total score was -.678. (The coefficients were negative because high effectiveness ratings generally corresponded with low grammatical scores, indicating few errors in writing.) No relationship was shown to exist between readability, human interest, or stuffiness of the deans' writing and effectiveness ratings. There was also no apparent relationship between these effectiveness ratings and the deans' academic training, teaching experience (considering both number of years and subject matter), or numbers of publications.

Further research needs to be done on the relationship between writing accurately and being seen as a considerate, effective leader. If the results of this study are replicated in other investigations, then related questions should be answered by additional studies. Are accurate writers also good leaders, or are they merely perceived more positively? Is there some character trait--attention to detail, perhaps, or verbal ability--which displays itself both in the personal relationships and in the writing of the most effective deans? Does the accuracy of written communication cause faculty to modify their perceptions of the dean?

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